

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

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R 251550 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1846

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TELAVIV

USINT CAIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 4827

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV LE PINT

SUBJECT: NEW LEBANESE CABINET FORMED

SUMMARY: NEW CABINET ANNOUNCED AT NOON APR 25 CONSIDERABLY MORE HOMOGENEOUS AND LIKELY BE MUCH MORE RESPONSIVE TO GUIDANCE FROM FRANGIE THAN ITS PREDECESSOR AND THUS POLICY TOWARDS US UNCHANGED. OF SEVENTEEN MINISTERS, FOUR ARE NON-DEPUTIES AND NONE ARE MAJOR POLITICAL FIGURES. THERE IS INCREASED ACCENT ON YOUTH AND COMPETENCE. KEY MINISTRIES OF FINANCE, FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE ARE IN HANDS OF FRANGIES PERSONAL CHOICES, WHILE MINISTER OF INTERIOR (CHAMOUNIST) SHOULD POSE NO OBSTACLE TO FRANGIES WISHES. END SUMMARY.

1. NEW CABINET WILL CONSIST OF SEVENTEEN MINISTERS, INCLUDING PRIME MINISTER HAFEZAN WITH DEPUTY FOUAD GHOSN (LONG TIME FRANGIE FOLLOWER) AS DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF DEFENSE. PRIME MINISTER WILL ALSO HOLD PORTFOLIO OF MINISTER INFORMATION. FOREIGN MINISTER ABOU HAMAL RETURNS TO HIS POST AS DOES FINANCE MINISTER FOUAD NAFFA AND MINISTER OF
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HYDRAULIC RESOURCES JOSEPH SKAFF. THESE THREE ARE GENERALLY CONSIDERED TO HAVE DONE BEST JOB AMONG PREVIOUS MINISTERS AND EMBASSY SHARES THIS VIEW. FOUR OTHER MINISTERS OF PREVIOUS CABINET RETURN IN NEW CAPACITIES, NOTABLY KHATCHIK BABIKIAN AS MINISTER OF PLAN (FOR WHICH HE WELL QUALIFIED) AND MALLEABLE BESHIR AWAR AS MINISTER OF INTERIOR. FIRST TIME MINISTERS INCLUDE PRESIDENTS SON DEPUTY TONY FRANGIE AS MINISTER OF PTT AND DEPUTY ALI KHALIL AS MINISTER TOURISM, POLITICALLY UNIMPORTANT POSTS WHICH APPEAR LOGICAL SLOTS FOR INCLUSION MOST PROMISING AMONG YOUNG RIGHT WING (TONY FRANGIEBL AND LEFT WING (ALI KHALIL) DEPUTIES. REMAINDER OF MINISERS SEEM TO HAVE BEEN CHOSEN WITH VIEW TO CONTENTING (TO SOME DEGREE) TRADITIONAL POLITICAL LEADERS AND HEAD OF BLOCS IN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

2. PULLING AND HAULING BETWEEN THESE TRADITIONAL POLITICAL LEADERS HELD UP FORMATION OF CABINET FOR SEVERAL DAYS AND RESULTED IN APPOINTMENT FOUR NON- DEPUTIES. UNWILLINGNESS OF SOME (E. G., JUMBLATT) TO SERVE, EXCEPT ON OWN CONDITINS, APPARENTLY BLOCKED HAFEZS ORIGINAL IDEA OF CABINET INCLUDING MAJOR FIGURES. AS IT STANDS, AT LEAST SIX MEMBERS NEW CABINET HAVE LONG BEEN CLOSE TO FRANGIE. CHAMOUN HAS THREE FOLLOWERS, INCLUDING MINISTER INTERIOR BESHIR AWAR. NO OTHER MAJOR LEADER HAS MORE THAN ONE. NONE OF FORMER PM SAEB SALAMS BLOC OF DEPUTIES IS INCLUDED, WHILE HIS TWO MINISTERS IN PREVIOUS CABINET BOTH DROPPED IN WHAT APPEARS AS CLEAR SIGN FRANGIE DISPLEASURE.

3. BREAKDOWN OF CABINET IS AS FOLLOWS:

PRIME MINISTER, MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND ACTING MIN HEALTH,
A. I. DR. AMIN AL HAFIZ

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENSE FOUAD GHOSN

MINISTER OF JUSTICE KAZIM AL KHALIL

MINISTER OF TOURISM ALI AL KHALIL

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE FEHMI CHAHIN

MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND PETROLEUM ZAKARIA NSOULI
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MINISTER OF ECONOMY AND COMMERCE BAHJE TABBARA

MINISTER OF INTERIOR BESHIR AL AWAR

MINISTER OF PTT TONY FRANGIE

MINISTER OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND LABOR EMILE ROUHANA

MINISTER OF NATIONAL EDUCATION EDMOND RIZK

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS KHALIL ABOU HAMAD

MINISTER OF HYDRO- ELECTRIC RESOURCES JOSEPH SKAFF

MINISTER OF FINANCE FOUAD NAFFA

MINISTER OF HOUSING AND COOPERATIVES MICHEL SASSINE

MINISTER OF PLANNING KHATCHIK BABIKIAN

MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS CHEIKH NAJIB ALAMEDDINE

4. WE WILL PROVIDE BIO ON NEW CABINET BY AIRGRAM AND WILL COMMENT
ON SUCH QUESTIONS AS LIKELY ATTITUDE RE FEDAYEEN WHEN MORE INFO
AVAILABLE. CLEARLY PRIMARY BURDEN OF STATE WILL REST ON SHOULDERS
OF PRESIDENT FRANGIE, MORE THAN EVER BEFORE.
BUFFUM

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